

**COLORADO CANYONS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA**  
**Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**  
**January 9, 2003**

Attendees:

Ken Currey	Joe Keys	Nadja Brozina	Mel Lloyd
Art Donoho	Dan Rosenthal	Shaun Deeney	Mike Perry
John Foster	Bob Silbernagel	Kevin Foote	Jane Ross
Warren Gore	Russ Walker	Steve Hall	Lovell Sasser
Greg Gnesios	Gene Arnesen	Kris Hjelle	Bill Schapley
Doug Hall	Sue Benjamin	Wade Johnson	Bob Sherrill
			Palma Wilson

**Greetings and Introduction**

Chairman Warren Gore called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. A round of introductions followed.

Greg Gnesios, Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area (CCNCA) Manager, expressed his appreciation in the turnout for tonight's meeting. After nearly a year of hard work, progress is being made.

**BLM Update**

Gene Arnesen, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Outdoor Recreation Planner, provided an update on BLM activities. The Bureau's fiscal year 2003 budget is awaiting approval by Congress, and the field offices are expecting budget input from the BLM Colorado State Office by the end of January. The State Office has estimated the CCNCA will receive \$425,000 in operating funds, but this does not include any planning funds.

Gene continued with a status update on the planning process, reporting that Working Groups have completed their responsibilities and the Northern Arizona University (NAU) visitor survey has been completed and the document is available for review. By February 2003, the CCNCA plans to have draft alternatives ready for the Advisory Council's review. A request was made to have the BLM provide copies of the NAU survey to the Advisory Council.

Jane Ross, CCNCA Planning Team Leader, will be looking at the four alternative ranges; those being geared more toward recreation, more toward conservation, taking no action at all, or finding an alternative that provides a balanced mix of both recreation

and conservation. The Advisory Council will be able to provide the BLM with a recommendation on the preferred alternative once they have been presented with descriptions of all of the alternatives.

Gene informed the group that the CCNCA staff would now be accelerating the process in order to meet the October 2004 date for the resource management plan's completion.

Warren emphasized that the Advisory Council should preserve the Working Groups' recommendations as much as possible.

Jane announced that the CCNCA planning web site is now live and can be accessed at [www.co.blm.gov/cocanplan](http://www.co.blm.gov/cocanplan). Jane introduced Mike Perry, the new executive director of the Museum of Western Colorado. Mike has been away from the Grand Valley for several years but recently returned, and the BLM looks forward to working closely with Mike. Mike said that he is excited about paleontological and cultural developments in the area and is glad to be back.

Jane reported that the BLM Grand Junction field office has initiated the process of acquiring the state land parcel that abuts the Mack Ridge Zone. A letter formally initiating the acquisition process was mailed today to the State Land Board Director.

### **Working Group Recommendations**

#### **Mack Ridge Working Group:**

Warren invited Kevin Foote, the Mack Ridge Working Group Leader, to present the group's recommendations. Jane added that Kevin did an excellent job as the group's leader and his extensive knowledge of the area was of great value in group discussions.

Kevin summarized the group's recommended actions, covered in the attachment to these minutes.

Art Donoho asked about the trail crossing Salt Wash. The Rabbit Valley Working Group should address this trail, since it is just outside the Mack Ridge focus area. Kevin indicated that it is part of the Kokopelli's Trail and should remain multiple use.

Joe Keys asked about the limitations set on commercial usage, especially the Monday through Friday stipulation. Kevin explained the group's preferences and that private use will be limited as well with permits required for larger groups. Joe expressed concerns with limiting access to the small outfitters and blocking them from using the area when their clients most want to use it. Joe wants to see equal treatment for the outfitted public. Gene offered that, with the current proposed group number limits, it might be feasible to allow commercial groups on weekends. Joe, Kevin, and Gene are forming a subcommittee to resolve this issue.

Warren had concerns with the recommendations regarding grazing permits and suggested that the Working Group revise the wording to “the BLM and the permittee will work together to manage grazing for sustainability and conservation in accordance with land health guidelines and standards for rangeland health.” With this revision, Warren requested that the first two bullets of the Working Group’s recommendations be eliminated.

John Foster asked about usage and fees, and Jane explained that, at the point that users are impacting the quality of experiences within the CCNCA, triggers would kick in limiting usage.

Warren prompted the group to propose a motion to accept this Working Group’s recommendations. Bob Silbernagel moved to accept the recommendations, taking into consideration the discussions regarding Crow Bottom Road, grazing permits, and commercial group sizes and dates. Art seconded the motion, which was passed.

### **Wilderness Working Group:**

Warren invited Bill Schapley, the Wilderness Working Group Leader, to present this group’s recommendations.

Bill explained that the group started meeting in April 2002 and had 12 meetings, one that included a joint meeting with the River Corridor Working Group. The legal and regulatory details of Wilderness management were explained in another meeting as a way to assist the group in formulating its recommendations. Field trips were taken to the various Wilderness areas, which also helped in developing and prioritizing the group’s list of issues. The group then set in and systematically worked through the majority of issues.

Bill felt that, as with the Mack Ridge Working Group, there was 100 percent consensus among the members that regularly attended all of the meetings.

Bill presented a highlight of the Working Group recommendations:

1. Keep the BS and hunter access roads primitive.
2. Keep many of the numerous spur roads of BS road open for up to a quarter of a mile for camping opportunities but close a few for rehabilitation.
3. Horse trailer parking is needed near the alcove off BS road.
4. Dispersed camping is important to keep, even if limited to designated campsites.
5. Keep the Jones Canyon Trailhead primitive.
6. Develop a single-track trail as an alternate route into Jones Canyon.

7. The recently acquired Gore Parcel should be closed to both motorized and mechanized use to protect the historic homesteads and Wilderness environment.
8. The group would like to see the Wilderness boundary revised so the Mee Canyon parking is outside of the Wilderness boundary.
9. Additional parking is needed at Rattlesnake Arches, but minimal maintenance is desired on the cherry-stem road.
10. Keep the upper and lower access roads primitive, limit it to maintenance with no improvements. The group would like to retain historic camping sites. A new parking lot is recommended at the "T" intersection, with a new trail developed from the "T" to the Mee Canyon Trail.
11. Group sizes should be limited to 25 or fewer individuals in the lower two miles of Mee Canyon.
12. Improve the interface among the various agencies and adjacent lands surrounding the CCNCA.
13. The Working Group is concerned with low-flying aircraft impacting the Wilderness experience.
14. The Pollock Canyon Estates, located near Pollock Bench, has issues with Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) and Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) activities adjacent to the Wilderness that may be perceived as encouraging trespass onto private land.

Warren suggested adding "designated" to the desired dispersed camping. Also, Spur C is appropriate for dispersed camping, as well as a horse trailer turnaround area.

Warren stated that wildlife management flights over the Wilderness should continue to be allowed, as an exception to the group's recommendations on over-flight limitations. Shaun Deeney, attending from the CDOW, added that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between BLM and CDOW will need to be reviewed.

The consensus was that the Front Country requires further attention than what is reflected in the Working Group recommendations. The Front Country Wilderness has very different issues than those of the Backcountry Wilderness. Greg would like to see the trail naming system revised. Greg mentioned that a pet waste disposal system is being implemented in the Devils Canyon area, and jog stroller use is an increasing activity on the Front Country trail system.

Shaun summarized CDOW's advice on big horn sheep, sage grouse, and other special species near the CCNCA. Wildlife habitat management is critical and the BLM and its

permittees are asked to keep this in mind. Shaun also reported that an agreement will be made on what constitutes emergency access and law enforcement. Shaun addressed the Working Group's recommendation for closing the DOW overflow parking lot in the Pollock Canyon area and reported that it is not a feasible recommendation. The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and CDOW would need to be included in any discussions regarding this. The group size recommendations are acceptable to CDOW, but the agency would prefer to not release specific information on the eagle and peregrine falcon nesting sites found in the area. CDOW will provide a map to the BLM reflecting these nesting sites.

Bob Sherrill, a member of the Working Group, asked the Advisory Group to closely review his recommendations regarding the interface area of the Front Country Wilderness and Horsethief Canyon State Wildlife Area. Bob urged coordination among the various agencies involved.

Ken Currey pointed out that the Advisory Council should read the entire recommendation package prior to accepting it, given that the package is several pages long. Ken made the motion to table the adoption of the Wilderness recommendations until the February 6 meeting, and Russ Walker seconded the motion, which passed.

### **Re-election of Council Officials**

Greg explained why this item was placed on the agenda. The BLM wanted to provide the Advisory Council with the opportunity to discuss whether individuals needed a break from the past year's demands. Warren reported that Dan Rosenthal has offered to step aside as co-chair given another commitment that occurs weekly on Thursdays at 5:00 p.m. The group agreed that electing a new vice-chair might be appropriate, and motioned that Bob Silbernagel be elected as the vice-chair of the Advisory Council. A unanimous vote passed this motion.

Ken Currey motioned that Warren Gore remain in the position of Chairman, which was also seconded and passed.

### **Target Shooting in the CCNCA**

Warren wanted to discuss this issue and stressed that target shooting is not to be confused with hunting. Others reported that the Rabbit Valley Working Group has already addressed this issue, with a recommendation that target shooting be banned altogether south of the interstate (I-70). An area is being considered north of I-70 for the purpose of target shooting.

Warren relayed his experience with finding broken clay pigeons within the CCNCA, and he feels the activity is inappropriate for an NCA. The remnants are toxic to both wildlife and cattle. Others have been discovered shooting at rocks, destroying the landscape.

Ken Currey stated that if target shooting must be kept as an activity, then north of I-70 in Rabbit Valley is the best area within the CCNCA.

Warren would like the group to consider the discussions tonight, and a recommendation be finalized in either the February or March meeting.

John Foster asked whether the proposed target shooting area could be moved further east of the proposed site near the Mygatt-Moore Quarry, with access from the north off of Highway 6 & 50.

### **Tentative February Agenda**

- River Group Recommendations
- Rabbit Valley Recommendations
- Wrap-Up Wilderness Recommendations
- Begin discussions on alternatives

### **Public Comment**

Palma Wilson, Superintendent of the Colorado National Monument, announced a meeting scheduled next week between the National Park Service and BLM planning teams, with the public invited. The Monument anticipates having its preferred alternative ready by the last week of February.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

## WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MACK RIDGE ZONE

GOALS: Maintain the Mack Ridge area to support quiet use activities including world-class single-track mountain biking, hiking, and horseback riding, in a manner that will promote land health, conserve natural resources and protect the enjoyment of current and future recreationalists.

Allow multiple use in the area while recognizing that user benefits and enjoyment will provide for self-limitation of activities in the area.

BENEFITS	EXPERIENCE	ACTIVITIES
Greater Sense of Overall Wellness Improved physical fitness Better health maintenance	Enjoying frequent exercise  Frequent access to a wide range of challenges  Testing endurance	Manage area for visitors to have the opportunity to engage in day use for mountain biking, horseback riding, and hiking
Increased Quality of Life Restored mind from unwanted stress	Meeting desired challenges  Improving skills	
Greater Cultivation of Outdoor-Oriented Lifestyle Freedom from urban lifestyle Enhanced sense of freedom in being able to get to this special place	Releasing mental tension  Savoring canyon-country aesthetics  Escaping everyday responsibilities	

### **Physical Setting:**

Maintain existing landscape, allowing for a few modifications for trail construction, trail rehabilitation and facility development, while striving for optimal ecological health.

### **Implementation Actions:**

1. Designate all trails in Mack Ridge area.

2. Designate entire length of Trail A for mountain biking, hiking and horse back riding.
3. Consider re-routing multiple-use trail on ridge below Steve's Loop (Trail C). Close and rehabilitate current double track once new trail is completed.
4. Pursue acquisition of State land and develop parking facilities and new trailhead, focusing on amenities for mountain bikers and hikers.
5. Construct multiple use trail connecting Mack Ridge trailhead and Mack Loop near proposed new trailhead (Trails D & F).
6. Connect Mary's Loop (Trail E) to Trail A.
7. Close and rehabilitate the road connecting Hawkeye Road to Moore Fun (I-70 side).
8. Complete proposed trail to replace road from recommendation #7 (Trail G).
9. Recommend directional traffic on Horsethief Bench trail (Trail H):  
Horses – counter clockwise  
Mountain Bikes – clockwise
10. Construct trail to connect Troy's Loop, from its southern terminus at Lions Loop, to Mack Ridge Trail (Trail J).
11. Construct multiple-use trail along Frontage (Hawkeye) Road (Trail K).
12. Designate Moore Fun and the front side of Mack Ridge trails for mountain bike use only.
13. Limit motorized use in the Mack Ridge area to the western end, specifically allowing motorized access on the trail off the far western end of Hawkeye Rd (the Frontage Road) to the Colorado River overlook above Lions Loop. Gate spur road to Crow Bottom.
14. Improve and stabilize proposed road in #13.
15. Close and rehabilitate all dead-ends and unused roads and trails.
16. Eventually provide restroom facilities at all trailheads.
17. Constrain Moore Fun parking area to prevent gradual encroachment.

### **Social Setting:**

Manage area to maximize Quiet Use zones in area for mountain biking, hiking and horseback riding. Provide education on etiquette and expectations to minimize conflict between user groups that will share the trails in Mack Ridge in increasing numbers in the future.

#### **Implementation Actions:**

- Sign trails for relative difficulty, length, and estimated completion time based on Working Group efforts:
- Control the number of user as necessary through:
  - Implement a reservation system
  - Implement a permit system
  - Implement a fee system

### **Administrative Setting:**

Manage area to develop and maintain opportunities for direct and indirect benefits, foster partnerships among user groups, local businesses, and government agencies and to optimize ecological health in Mack Ridge Area.

#### **Implementation Actions:**

Use signage that will encourage Quiet Uses (mountain biking, hiking, running).

Use indirect methods to resolve user conflicts – on-site presence, user education and information.

For natural resource protection, competitive events will not be encouraged in the area, and will be limited to hiking/running events that will be approved by the BLM on a case-by-case basis.

Limit events (groups of 50 or more), whether classified as competitive or commercial, to one event per month per year. Two discretionary events would be allowed per year, but a maximum of two events per month would apply.

Limit special recreation permits to a maximum of five permittees per year, with a limit of 14 people (including guides) per permit, per day. Consider an additional requirement to limit commercial use to Monday through Friday.

Due to a gradual yet noticeable decrease in vegetation in the Mack Ridge Area and a desire to reach optimal ecological health in the area, the Mack Ridge Working Group recommends the BLM manage grazing for sustainability and conservation using the following guidelines:

- The BLM and the permittee will work together to manage grazing for sustainability and conservation in accordance with the standards and guidelines for rangeland health.
- Eliminate potential for sheep grazing to resume in Mack Ridge.

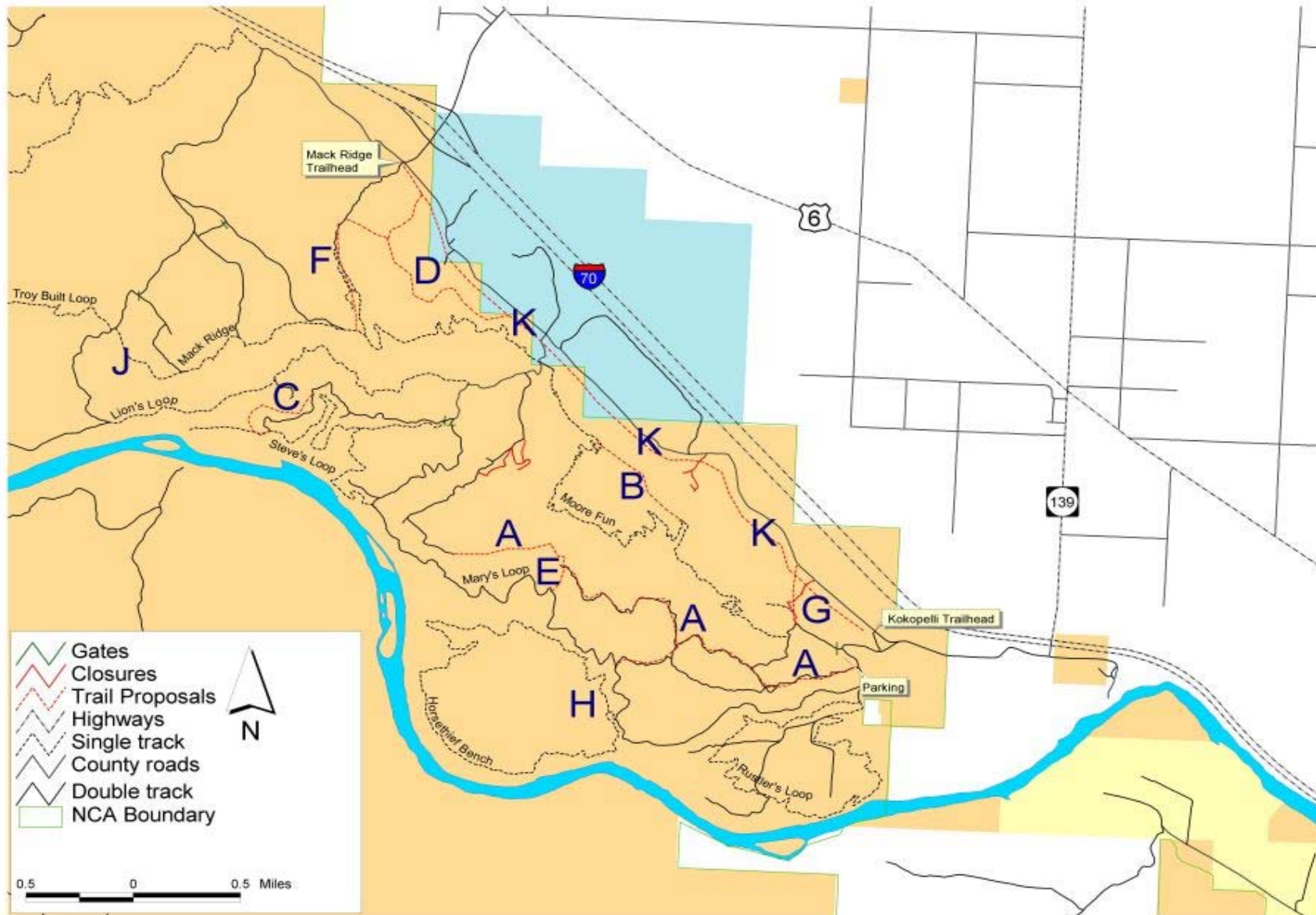
### **Indirect benefits**

Family – The benefits of achieving a sense of increased quality of life, reducing stress and improving physical fitness extend beyond to those in close contact with the user – the family and ripples outward to those in contact with each family member resulting in positive impact to the community as a whole.

Community – In addition to positive psychological benefits, the community also benefits from its association with the area. As people cultivate a an aesthetic appreciation for the area and an outdoor lifestyle, the gateway communities to the recreation areas earn recognition and become a desired destination for local and non-locals alike.

Economy – As an activity such as mountain biking becomes increasingly popular, and an area like Mack Ridge earns renown for the caliber of mountain biking it offers, people invest in the activity by purchasing equipment, supplies, food and lodging all of which result in increasingly positive impact to the local economy.

## MACK RIDGE ALTERNATIVES-RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADVISORY COUNCIL (01/09/03)



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